

Request for Response: Specialty Crops Funding
RFR#: AGR-SC-2013
Department: Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)
Release Date: February 19, 2013
Concept Proposals Due by: March 29, 2013 by 4:30 pm

Contact: Julia Grimaldi, Program Coordinator
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Specialty Crop Block Grant Program 2013 Solicitation Timeline

Phase I	Concept Proposal Due March 29, 2013 by 4:30 pm
Phase II	Notification by MDAR to submit grant proposals: April 29, 2013
Phase III	Full Grant Proposal Due, May 17, 2013 by 4:30 pm

Grant Program Description:

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is soliciting proposals for projects that specifically address the goals the United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) has for **solely enhancing the competitiveness of Specialty Crops**. *Specialty crops are defined by the USDA as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture (including maple syrup and honey), nursery crops (including floriculture).* **Feed crops, food grains, livestock, dairy products, seafood products and oil seed crops are NOT eligible.** A full definition and a list of *Specialty Crops* can be found on the USDA—Specialty Crop Website, www.ams.usda.gov/scbgbp or see attachment A “USDA’s List of Specialty Crops”. The USDA is the final approval and funding entity for the Specialty Crop Grant Program. Although, MDAR shall conduct the initial review and award recommendations to the USDA, the USDA shall make the final decision concerning grant awards.

Who May apply:

Grant funds will **not be awarded** for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers, eligible non-profit organizations, local, government entities, for-profit organizations, industry trade associations, producer groups, and commodity commissions can submit projects that aim to enhance the production and competitiveness of Massachusetts specialty crop industries, provided their proposals meet all the specifications in this Request for Response (RFR) and the USDA’s NOFA.

Direction on the Submission of Response:

MDAR'S Specialty Crop Block Grant Program has a **two-phase application** process. The **first phase** is the development of a **required** Concept Proposal. This step allows applicants to explain the main points of their project without the high level of detail that is necessary during the second phase of the application process. Concept Proposals are competitively ranked and scored by a Review Panel. Projects with the highest combined scores will serve as recommendations to the Commissioner as to which applicants should be asked to complete the **second phase** of the application process. All projects are subject to the availability of funds.

Required Concept Proposal Application (Form A) and Concept Proposal Instructions (Form B)

Submission Instructions:

Five (5) copies of the concept proposals must be received **not postmarked** by March 29, 2013 by 4:30 p.m. and one (1) copy must be emailed to julia.grimaldi@state.ma.us. Mail concept proposals to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Attn: Julia Grimaldi, Program Coordinator, 251 Causeway St. Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114.

Acquisition Method:

Grants: Contracts.

Number of Grantees:

MDAR is looking to award multiple grants.

Identify if Single or Multiple Contractors can use this RFR

One contractor can use this RFR.

Contract Duration:

The grant period can begin on October 1, 2013 or later and project must be completed by September 30, 2016 or earlier.

Contract Expenditures:

The Department intends to fund approximately \$400,000.00 in projects which will result from this competitive RFR process. A range of \$25,000 to \$75,000 per project is suggested. ***Funding is contingent upon the passage of the Farm Bill (Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012).***

Eligible Projects:

Projects must be **solely** related to enhancing the competitiveness of Specialty Crops; specifically in regards to the following areas specified by USDA. Visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/scbgp> to view grant awards for projects that have been funded from 2006 – 2012.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
- assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution process in implementing practices and standards that include but are not limited to the "Commonwealth Quality Program", "Good Agricultural

Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors;

- investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- enhancing food safety;
- developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- and development of organic and sustainable production practices

Examples of unacceptable project based upon information from the USDA:

- A proposal for funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business;
- A proposal for funds from a specialty crop organization to promote their members’ businesses;
- A proposal for capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land;
- A proposal that seeks additional funds to support a current or previously state or federally funded project;
- A proposal that seeks to support a non-specialty crop project

A successful respondent will enter into a contract with MDAR. MDAR reserves the right to fund the project in part, add and delete tasks, and ask for clarification on the work plan, timeline and budget. MDAR may ask grantees to acknowledge MDAR as a grantor where appropriate. No contract shall be entered into until MDAR is satisfied with all the specifications of the project. Any grant award is dependent upon the availability of federal funds and the final approval from the USDA.

Potential Responders are hereby notified that all successful grantees shall be required to submit progress reports on a regular basis. Due dates for progress reports shall be specified in the contract’s Work Plan. The reports may require, among other things, a narrative detailing how project goals are being completed, details of obstacles that are preventing the project from being completed, and an expenditure report detailing how the grant funding is being expended.

Note that any successful contractor will be required to follow all the applicable federal and state regulations that pertain to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Evaluation:

Concept Proposals shall be evaluated based upon how well it meets the following requirements:

- a. How will the project effectively promote the competitiveness of specialty crops as a whole;
- b. A clear project purpose that addresses a specific issue, problem, interest or need that is timely and important;
- c. Clear goals and objectives;
- d. At least one distinct, quantifiable and **measureable outcome** that directly and meaningfully supports the project’s purpose;
- e. An effective timeline with a strategy and accountability for project implementation; and
- f. A well constructed and detailed budget.

Concept Proposals with the highest combined scores will serve as recommendations to the Commissioner as to which applicants should be asked to complete the second phase of the application process.

Phase II: If your concept proposal is accepted you may be asked to provide additional information as follows:

I. Project Purpose:

- The purpose should include the specific issue, problem, interest or need to be addressed and why the project is important and timely;
- If this is a marketing program, show that funding will be used to solely enhance the competitiveness of Specialty Crops;
- If this is a continuation of a previous Specialty Crop program, show how this program builds upon the latter one, a duplication of a previous project will not be accepted for funding;
- Indicate if the project has been funded by other entities or has been submitted for funding through other entities. Has this project been submitted to other State or Federal funding programs? If so, how will these funds be used to supplement the other funds?

II. Potential Impact:

- Discuss who is to be affected by the project. Indicate how many people or operations are going to be affected by the project;
- Who are the intended beneficiaries of the project;
- Provide an assessment of the potential economic impact of the project (if applicable).

III. Expected Measurable Outcomes (attachment B):

- Describe at least one (1) distinct and quantifiable outcome that is meaningfully related to project's purpose;
- This outcome must be external to the project (it cannot be the existence of the project itself, but must be a result of the project) and relevant to the intended beneficiaries of the project;
- Provide a timeline when outcome measures will be achieved. A measurement activity can take place after the grant's project period has ended;
- Describe how the outcome will be quantified. **Include a monitoring plan involving the collection and analysis of data relevant to the outcome.** This can take place outside of the project's timeline.

IV. Work Plan:

- Briefly explain the activities that will be performed to accomplish the objectives of the project;
- Describe who will be performing the work.

V. Budget:

A detailed budget will include the following:

- Staff time will be broken down by each staff member (specifying hours on the project and hourly rate), and the **rate** of fringe benefits;
- Subcontractors must equally specify what the **hourly rate** and number of hours they will spend on the project;
- Additional costs (travel, per Diem, etc.) for each subcontractor must be as exact as possible;
- Contractual hourly rates cannot exceed the salary of a GS-14 step 10 Federal employee in the area (for more information please go to www.opm.gov and click on Salaries and Wages), 2012 rate: \$65.84/hr;
- Equipment purchased shall only be used for the project;
- Supplies must be exactly specified (showing how many of each supply will be purchased, the cost per item, and the total cost).

Program Income: If program income will be earned on any project, indicate the nature and source of program income, the estimated amount, and how the income will be used to further enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. For example if registration fees are being collected at a conference as part of the project, indicate the estimated amount of registration fees that will be collected and describe how the registration fees will be used to solely enhance the competitive of specialty crops.

Indirect Costs: **There will be no indirect funding available for projects. Fringe and Personnel charges are acceptable.**

Matching Funds/In-Kind: These are not required, but encouraged. Show how matching funds are to be expended and from what entity the funds are coming.

If federal or state funds are currently or previously being used for the program, justify how the funds requested in the 2013 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program are being used to **expand the current or previous program.**

In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the *Standard Contract Form and Instructions* and the *Commonwealth Terms and Conditions* (either version). However, the following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00:

The terms of *801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services* (and *808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services*, if applicable) are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 (and 808 CMR 1.00, if applicable). Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all

communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

Items with the text, "*☞ Required for POS Only*" specify a requirement for Purchase of Service (POS) human and social services procured under 801 CMR 21.00, *Procurement of Commodities or Services, Including Human and Social Services* and 808 CMR 1.00, *Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Service*.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) that resulted in the Supplier Diversity Program in Public Contracting. M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships. All bidders must follow the requirements set forth in the SDP section of the RFR, which will detail the specific requirements relating to the prime vendor's inclusion of M/WBEs. Bidders are required to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage bidder's participation of SDP objectives, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan for large procurements greater than \$150,000 will be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an SDP Plan is submitted, negotiated and approved, the agency will then monitor the contractor's performance, and use actual expenditures with SDO certified contractors to fulfill their own SDP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size; however, submission of an SDP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$150,000.

This RFR will contain some or all of the following components as part of the Supplier Diversity Program Plan submitted by bidders:

- Sub-contracting with certified M/WBE firms as defined within the scope of the RFR,
- Ancillary use of certified M/WBE firms,
- Growth and Development activities to increase M/WBE capacity,

All certified businesses that are included in the bidder's SDP proposal are required to submit an up to date copy of their certification letter. For further information on SDO certification, contact the Supplier Diversity Office at (617) 502-8831 or via the Internet at www.mass.gov/sdo. Other resources are available to M/WBE firms that may qualify for SDO certification at www.mass.gov/sdp.

Supplier Diversity Program Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the agency is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Agencies may define required deliverables including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing compliance of subcontracting commitments made in a bidder's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors.

Agricultural Products Preference (only applicable if this is a procurement for Agricultural Products) - Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006 directs the State Purchasing Agent to grant a preference to products of agriculture grown or produced using locally grown products. Such locally grown or produced products shall be purchased unless the price of the goods exceeds the price of products of agriculture from outside the Commonwealth by more than 10%. For purposes of this preference, products of agriculture are defined to include any agricultural, aqua cultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest

products, the raising of livestock, including horses, raising of domesticated animals, bees, fur-bearing animals and any forestry or lumbering operations.

Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The Procurement Management Team (PMT) may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The PMT and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the PMT regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS. Comm-PASS is the official system of record for all procurement information which is publicly accessible at no charge at www.comm-pass.com. Information contained in this document and in each tab of the Solicitation, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bidders' Forum(s), are all components of the Solicitation.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Solicitation via Comm-PASS, by using the free Browse and Search tools offered on each record-related tab on the main navigation bar (Solicitations and Forums). Forums support Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Solicitation and publication of official answers. All records on Comm-PASS are comprised of multiple tabs, or pages. For example, Solicitation records contain Summary, Rules, Issuer(s), Intent or Forms & Terms and Specifications, and Other Information tabs. Each tab contains data and/or file attachments provided by the Procurement Management Team. All are incorporated into the Solicitation.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check Comm-PASS for:

- Any addenda or modifications to this Solicitation, by monitoring the "Last Change" field on the Solicitation's Summary tab, and
- Any Bidders' Forum records related to this Solicitation (see Locating an Online Bidders' Forum for information on locating these records).

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Response based on an out-of-date Solicitation or on information received from a source other than Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS SmartBid Subscription. Bidders may elect to obtain an optional SmartBid subscription which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to Comm-PASS records. When properly configured and managed, SmartBid provides a subscriber with:

- A secure desktop within Comm-PASS for efficient record management
- A customizable profile reflecting the subscriber's product/service areas of interest
- A customizable listing in the publicly accessible Business Directory, an online "yellow-pages" advertisement
- Full-cycle, automated email alert whenever any record of interest is posted or updated
- Access to Online Response Submission, when allowed by the Issuer, to support:
 - paperless bid drafting and submission to an encrypted lock-box prior to close date
 - electronic signature of OSD forms and terms; agreement to defer wet-ink signature until Contract award, if any
 - withdrawal of submitted bids prior to close date
 - online storage of submitted bids

Every public purchasing entity within the borders of Massachusetts may post records on Comm-PASS at no charge. Comm-PASS has the potential to become the sole site for all public entities in Massachusetts. SmartBid fees are only based on and expended for costs to operate, maintain and develop the Comm-PASS system.

Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

Costs. Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response, and accepted by a department as part of a contract, will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

Debriefing. ☞ *Required for POS Only. This is an optional specification for non-POS RFRs.* Non-successful bidders may request a debriefing from the department. Department debriefing procedures may be found in the RFR. Non-successful POS bidders aggrieved by the decision of a department must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to an administrative appeal.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to Departments. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the debriefing process and remain aggrieved with the decision of the department may appeal that decision to the department head. Department appeal procedures may be found in the RFR.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to OSD. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the department appeal process and remain aggrieved by the selection decision of the department may appeal the department decision to the Operational Services Division. The basis for an appeal to OSD is limited to the following grounds:

1. The competitive procurement conducted by the department failed to comply with applicable regulations and guidelines. These would be limited to the requirements of 801 CMR 21.00 or any successor regulations, the policies in the OSD Procurement Information Center, subsequent policies and procedures issued by OSD and the specifications of the RFR; or
2. There was a fundamental unfairness in the procurement process. The allegation of unfairness or bias is one that is easier to allege than prove, consequently, the burden of proof rests with the bidder to provide sufficient and specific evidence in support of its claim. OSD will presume that departments conducted a

fair procurement absent documentation to the contrary.

Requests for an appeal must be sent to the attention of the State Purchasing Agent at Room 1017, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 and be received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the postmark of the notice of the department head's decision on appeal. Appeal requests must specify in sufficient detail the basis for the appeal. Sufficient detail requires a description of the published policy or procedure which was applied and forms the basis for the appeal and presentation of all information that supports the claim under paragraphs 1 or 2 above. OSD reserves the right to reject appeal requests based on grounds other than those stated above or those submitted without sufficient detail on the basis for the appeal.

The decision of the State Purchasing Agent shall be rendered, in writing, setting forth the grounds for the decision within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the appeal request. Pending appeals to the State Purchasing Agent shall not prohibit the department from proceeding with executing contracts.

Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the PMT, including requests for clarification. The PMT and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the PMT to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors are able to track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. A link to the EFT application can be found on the [OSD Forms](#) page (www.mass.gov/osd). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](#) site (www.mass.gov/osc). Click on MASSfinance.

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* to this department for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder is already enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The PMT will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings with the bidder.

Environmental Response Submission Compliance. In an effort to promote greater use of recycled and environmentally preferable products and minimize waste, all responses submitted should comply with the following guidelines:

- All copies should be printed double sided.
- All submittals and copies should be printed on recycled paper with a minimum post-consumer content of 30% or on tree-free paper (i.e. paper made from raw materials other than trees, such as kenaf). To document the use of such paper, a photocopy of the ream cover/wrapper should be included with the response.
- Unless absolutely necessary, all responses and copies should minimize or eliminate use of non-recyclable or non re-usable materials such as plastic report covers, plastic dividers, vinyl sleeves and GBC binding. Three ringed binders, glued materials, paper clips and staples are acceptable.
- Bidders should submit materials in a format which allows for easy removal and recycling of paper materials.
- Bidders are encouraged to use other products which contain recycled content in their response documents. Such products may include, but are not limited to, folders, binders, paper clips, diskettes, envelopes, boxes, etc. Where appropriate, bidders should note which products in their responses are made with recycled materials.
- Unnecessary samples, attachments or documents not specifically asked for should not be submitted.

Executive Order 509, *Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies*. Food purchased and served by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009 that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available at the Department's website: [Executive Order # 509 Guidance](#).

Filing Requirements. *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Successful bidders must have filed their Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report (UFR), as required for current contractors, with the Operational Services Division via the Internet using the UFR eFiling application for the most recently completed fiscal year before a contract can be executed and services may begin. Other contractor qualification/risk management reporting requirements and non-filing consequences promulgated by secretariats or departments pursuant to 808 CMR 1.04(3) may also apply. In the event immediate services are required by a department, a contract may be executed and services may begin with the approval of OSD and the appropriate secretariat. However, unless authorized by OSD and the appropriate secretariat, the contractor will not be paid for any such services rendered until the UFR has been filed.

HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations. Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated there under (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it

is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

Minimum Bid Duration. Bidders responses/bids made in response to this RFR must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of bid submission.

Pricing: Price Limitation: The bidder must agree that no other state or public entity customer within the United States of similar size and with similar terms and conditions shall receive a lower price for the same commodity and service during the contract period, unless this same lower price is immediately effective for the Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth believes that it is not receiving this lower price as required by this language, the bidder must agree to provide current or historical pricing offered or negotiated with other state or public entities at any time during the contract period in the absence of proprietary information being part of such contracts.

Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD). All bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically can be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form can be found under the Forms and Terms tab of this solicitation.

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the PMT. The PMT will review, negotiate or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

Provider Data Management. *☞ Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) have established a Provider Data Management (PDM) business service that is integrated into the Virtual Gateway. PDM is accessible by providers with current POS contracts. Departments may require that bidders with current POS contracts submit certain RFR-required documents through PDM. These documents have been specified in the RFR. When submitting documents via PDM, bidders are required to print and sign a PDM Documentation Summary. PDM users should verify that all information is accurate and current in PDM. Bidders are required to include the signed PDM Documentation Summary in their RFR response.

Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The PMT reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal. Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes are prohibited by law.

Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

Attachment A:

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S LIST OF SPECIALTY CROPS

Please go to www.usda.gov and the specialty crop block grant page in order to see the USDA's list of eligible specialty crops and other key resources.

Fruit and Tree Nuts					
Almond	Apple	Apricot	Avocado	Banana	Blackberry
Blueberry	Breadfruit	Cacao	Cashew	Citrus	Cherimoya
Cherry	Chestnuts (for nuts)	Coconut	Coffee	Cranberry	Currant
Date	Fejou	Fig	Filbert (hazelnut)	Gooseberry	Grape (including raisin)
Guava	Kiwi	Litchi	Macadamia	Mango	Nectarine
Olive	Papaya	Passion Fruit	Peach	Pear	Pecan
Persimmon	Pineapple	Pistachio	Plum (including prune)	Pomegranate	Quince
Raspberry	Strawberry	Suriname Cherry	Walnut		

Vegetables					
Artichoke	Asparagus	Bean (snap or green Lima dry, edible)	Beet, table	Broccoli (including broccoli raab0)	Brussels sprouts
Cabbage (including Chinese)	Carrot	Cauliflower	Celeriac	Celery	Chive
Collards (including kale)	Cucumber	Edamame	Eggplant	Endive	Garlic
Horseradish	Kohlrabi	Leek	Melon (all types)	Mushroom (cultivated)	Mustard and other greens
Okra	Pea (garden, English or edible pod)	Onion	Opuntia	Parsley	Parsnip
Pepper	Potato	Pumpkin	Radish (all types)	Rhubarb	Rutabaga
Salsify	Spinach	Squash (winter and summer)	Sweet corn	Sweet potato	Swiss chard
Taro	Tomato (including tomatillo)	Turnip	Watermelon		

Culinary Herbs and Spices					
Ajwain	Allspice	Angelica	Anise	Annatto	Artemisia (all types)
Asafetid	Basil (all types)	Bay (cultivated)	Bladder wrack	Bolivian Coriander	Borage

Calendula	Chamomile	Candle nut	Caper	Caraway	Cardamom
Cassia	Catnip	Chervil	Chicory	Cicely	Cilantro
Cinnamon	Clary	Cloves	Comfrey	Common rue	Coriander
Cress	Cumin	Curry	Dill	Fennel	Fenugreek
Filé (gumbo, cultivated)	Finger root	French Sorrel	Galangal	Ginger	Hops
Horsehound	Hyssop	Lavender	Lemon thyme	Lovage	Mace
Mahlab	Malabathrum	Marjoram	Mint (all types)	Nutmet	Oregano
Orris root	Paprika	Parsley	Pepper	Rocket (arugula)	Rosemary
Rue	Saffron	Sage (all types)	Savory (all types)	Tarragon	Thyme
Vanilla	Wasabi	Water cress			

Medicinal Herbs					
Artemisia	Arum	Astragalus	Boldo	Cananga	Comfrey
Coneflower	Fenugreek	Feverfew	Foxglove	Ginkgo biloba	Ginseng
Goat's rue	Goldenseal	Gypsywort	Horehound	Horsetail	Lavender
Liquorice	Marshmallow	Mullein	Passion flower	Petchouli	Pennyroyal
Pokeweed	St. John's wort	Senna	Skullcap	Sonchus	Sorrel
Stevia	Tansy	Urtica	Witch hazel	Wood betony	Wormwood
Yarrow	Yerba Buena				

Note: Under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), turfgrass sod is not eligible. Under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program—Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB), horticulture was added to the definition making turfgrass sod and seed eligible.

Nursery, Floriculture and Horticulture Crops					
Christmas Trees	Cut Flowers	Honey	Turgrass	Tea leaves	Maple Syrup
Honey					

Attachment B: Developing Expected Measurable Outcomes

STEPS TO DEVELOPING OUTCOME MEASURES

The outcomes must include a **goal, performance measure, benchmark**, and a **target**, and be clearly identified in your final proposal. The following four steps provide guidance on how to develop outcome measures.

1) DETERMINE WHAT THE PROJECT WILL ACCOMPLISH, I.E., THE INTENDED RESULTS OF THE PROJECT, GENERALLY EXPRESSED AS A GOAL OR OBJECTIVE.

Goals or objectives should be: a) based on a needs analysis and be specific, realistic results you hope to achieve through the project activities; b) specific; and c) outcome-oriented. Outcome-oriented objectives identify the ultimate result, while the work plan activities identify how you intend to achieve the objectives. When developing outcome-oriented objectives, ask yourself “why” you are performing each grant activity; and specify not only what will be achieved, but also when those results will be achieved.

2) FIGURE OUT HOW TO MEASURE THE RESULTS AND SELECT THE PERFORMANCE MEASURE

For each objective identified in step 1, select the performance measure. Performance measures are measures/indicators used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results. They are usually expressed in quantifiable terms and should be objective and measurable (numeric values, percentages, scores and indices); although in certain circumstances qualitative measures are appropriate.

3) DETERMINE THE BENCHMARK FOR EACH MEASURE AND SET TARGET GOALS FOR FUTURE PERFORMANCE

For each measure identified in step 2, determine the benchmarks against which you will measure. Benchmarks are usually determined by researching past circumstances in the area you are trying to measure. As an alternative, you may use benchmarks established by third parties accepted as the standard-setters in your industry. If data does not exist, describe the lack of data. It may be appropriate in the first year to set vaguer targets, such as “improvement” where any increase represents outcome achievement, and set more concrete targets in subsequent years when benchmark data is available.

Use the benchmark data to set targets for the quantity of change expected. Targets may be framed in terms of:

- a) Absolute level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people);
- b) Change in level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people, 35 more than last year); or
- c) Change in relation to the scale of the problem (ex: feed 150 homeless people, approximately 10% of the city’s homeless population.)

If you are starting up a new project or trying new approaches remember that little or no measurable progress will be evident in the project start-up phase. This delay in seeing measurable results should be reflected in target-setting. When setting targets, you should take into account external factors that influence your success. You may have a grand ultimate goal, but you should view annual targets as small steps toward that ultimate goal.

You may also want to set stretch goals by using benchmarks as your targets. Benchmarks tell you how the rest of the industry is doing; when you gather data for benchmarks, you look at the results of other

organizations serving your type(s) of customers, doing your type of work. In your State plan, you may want to stick to a modest level of planned achievement and reserve your stretch goals for internal use. Another alternative is to include minimum and maximum targets in your application. For example, “We plan, at a minimum, for a 5% increase. However, we will strive for a 10% increase, which our data shows is possible if all external factors work in our favor and our new methodology yields the same results in the demonstration phase.

4) DEVELOP YOUR PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN OR DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Define who your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with the application. Outline how data gathered will be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. This data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget. When expected measurable outcomes are monitored outside the grant period, include the performance monitoring plan in the expected measureable outcomes section and indicate how monitoring will occur after the grant period ends without Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding.